

— AMERICA'S —  
**TEST KITCHEN**

# Shredded Chicken Tacos (Tinga de Pollo)



## WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

*Tinga de pollo* is typically made by poaching breast meat separately from the tomato-and-chipotle-based sauce and combining the two only briefly at the end. For deeper flavor, we chose boneless thighs and cooked them directly in the sauce. Fire-roasted tomatoes increased smokiness, and a little brown sugar and lime juice and zest further boosted the complexity. Simmering the cooked shredded chicken in the sauce for a full 10 minutes before serving gave the sauce a chance to thicken and loosened the chicken's muscle fibers so the sauce could really work its way into every crevice in the shredded meat's abundant surface area.

## INGREDIENTS

### CHICKEN

- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, halved and sliced thin
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground

## INSTRUCTIONS

In addition to the Mexican-Style Pickled Vegetables (Escabèche) and the toppings included here, Mexican crema (or sour cream) and minced onion are also good choices. If you can't find Cotija cheese, you can substitute crumbled feta. The shredded chicken mixture also makes a good topping for tostadas.

**1. FOR THE CHICKEN:** Pat chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add half of chicken and brown on both sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to large plate. Repeat with remaining chicken.

## SERVES 6

cinnamon

- 1** (14.5-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- ½** cup chicken broth
- 2** tablespoons minced canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce plus 2 teaspoons adobo sauce
- ½** teaspoon brown sugar
- 1** teaspoon grated lime zest plus 2 tablespoons juice

#### TACOS

- 12** (6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed
- 1** avocado, halved, pitted, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2** ounces Cotija cheese, crumbled (1/2 cup)
- 6** scallions, minced
- minced fresh cilantro
- Lime wedges

**2.** Reduce heat to medium, add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to now-empty pot, and heat until shimmering. Add onion and cook, stirring frequently, until browned, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, cumin, and cinnamon and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, broth, chipotle and adobo sauce, and sugar and bring to boil, scraping up any browned bits.

**3.** Return chicken to pot, reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until meat registers 195 degrees, 15 to 20 minutes, flipping chicken after 5 minutes. Transfer chicken to cutting board.

**4.** Transfer cooking liquid to blender and process until smooth, 15 to 30 seconds. Return sauce to pot. When cool enough to handle, use two forks to shred chicken into bite-size pieces. Return chicken to pot with sauce. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until sauce is thickened and clings to chicken, about 10 minutes. Stir in lime zest and juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

**5. FOR THE TACOS:** Spoon chicken into center of each warm tortilla and serve, passing avocado, Cotija, scallions, cilantro, and lime wedges separately.